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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

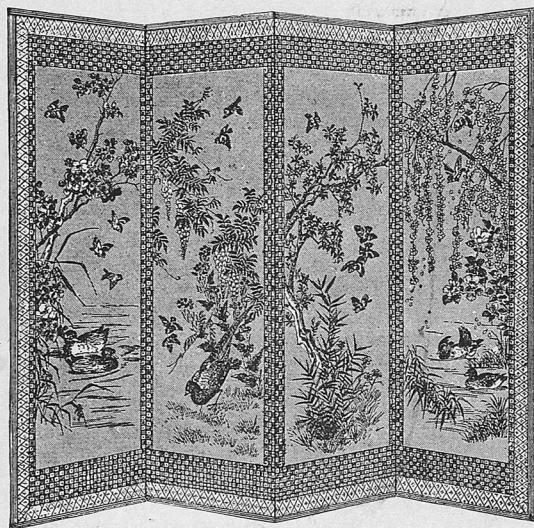
A. A. VANTINE & CO.

**A**MONGST the novelties recently imported by Messrs. Vantine & Company is a line of Shifu curtains. The material is a mixture of jute and cotton, and is to be had in all colors. A pair of curtains on exhibition are of a mottled red color, which is caused by the action of the dye on the different materials employed in the manufacture of the fabric. These curtains are elaborately embroidered in floss silk and gilt thread, and are quite moderate in price. The material also comes in the plain form, 36 inches wide.

Another novel material is cotton crepe, gold painted or stamped with beautiful floral designs in the Japanese style. Draperies made of this unique and showy material are known as Hechima curtains. They measure three by ten and one-half feet, and can be simply shirred on rods, or suspended from rings to poles. The fabric known as Tsumugi is a very soft Japanese cotton fabric, well adapted for draperies. There is also a beautiful silk pongee fabric, decorated with gold thread embroidery.

In table covers kobe crepe presents a rough, brilliant finish, extremely suitable for hand-embroidered effects, which are deftly done in gilt metal thread. These table covers come in all the soft shades.

A novel material is a metal netting, which is knotted into a great variety of patterns. It is of Japanese manufacture and can be cut anywhere without raveling the netting. It is of all



A Japanese Folding Screen.

grades of fineness, from a strong fish net caliber down to the finest hair-like mesh, and it is used to decorate covers for foot-stools, mantel lambrequins, lamp shades, etc.

It has hitherto been impossible to obtain the gorgeous satin hand-embroidered Japanese portières at a less cost than one hundred and fifty dollars a pair, but Messrs. Vantine & Co. have, after considerable effort, succeeded in getting the Japanese to manufacture a low-priced satin portière, which has all the sumptuous effects of the most costly fabrics, and which can be sold for sixty-five dollars a pair. There is on exhibition some old gold satin portières, gorgeously embroidered in Japanese silk, with the flowers, birds and landscape effects enclosed in richly embroidered borders. No two of the patterns are alike, and the effect is simply magnificent.

In view of the great demand at present for rich, low-toned colors in decorative fabrics, the firm have made a practice for years past of hunting up all kinds of Japanese woven goods, whether the old time robes of priests and nobles, or altar cloths and temple draperies. They have succeeded in collecting a vast quantity of odds and ends of Japanese silk fabrics, many of which are extremely old, and are all the more valued on that account because of their exquisite and beautiful colorings. No

modern dyer can hope to rival by any combination of colors the exquisite tints of yellow, red, orange, and other shades that are presented by these unique remnants. There is an altar cloth exhibited which was originally a brilliant yellow, but which is now toned down to an indescribably old yellow hue that is extremely rich and satisfying to the eye. Ladies purchase quantities of these fabrics for making unique cushions and for mantel and easel draperies.

In Japanese brocades there are a great many designs in which gold threads are interwoven. There is a white and gold fabric, which is a beautiful material for upholstering white and gold furniture. In many of the Japanese figured silks a certain portion of the design is embroidered with gold threads by hand, after the material has left the loom, and unlimited quantities of these materials can be purchased with this hand embroidery superadded to the original fabric. Their line of figured silks for drapery purposes is simply inexhaustible. Not only textile fabrics, but also bronzes and Japanese pottery are imported by this firm in large quantities. Some of the larger pieces of Japanese bronze work, with the figure of Buddha seated on the lotus, or with a dragon encircling a vase, lend a noble and majestic air to an apartment thus decorated, and such pieces of metal art work are very highly prized by connoisseurs. The vase is usually cast in solid bronze, and that part of the ornamentation in low relief taking the form of trees with branches covered with flowers, birds and other animals is elaborately chiseled out of the solid bronze by the hands of the workman, so that the Japanese vase is at once the joint product of the founder and sculptor in metal.

No less beautiful are the curiously carved ivories, and there are two enormous segments of elephants' tusks, which are covered with figures representing the festival of the New Year in the olden time. Of course the Japanese have adopted the Western almanac, and their New Year falls upon the first of January, like our own, but not many years ago their New Year fell upon a different date and was attended with imposing ceremonies.

There are also exhibited a number of beautiful Chinese carved cabinets in teak wood and ebony, many of them inlaid with mother-of-pearl. These old Chinese carvings are in their way quite as beautiful as the ivory carvings of the Japanese. There is a large line of beautiful Japanese screens recently imported, one of which we illustrate, and there is a great business being done at present in bead and rice portières, which are charming draperies for hot weather, and at all seasons lend a unique grace to the appointments of a doorway or window.

## DECORATIVE FURS.



**N**O modern interior, however magnificent in its appointments, is considered finished without the use of fur rugs, which are not only interesting from a mere decorative point of view, but the animal whose skin is thus utilized has a history of its own, which imparts a rare charm to the rug itself. When we see a tawny yellow lion skin rug, with the black tuft at the end of the tail that distinguishes the lion from all other members of the cat family, we see in imagination the magnificent lion, with his head proudly erect, as though he were still king of the forest; and the skin of the polar bear recalls

the desolate regions within the arctic circle and the perpetual ice amongst which the animal dwells.

Every country, from the frigid zone to the tropics, is represented in the fashionable rugs and robes that are so largely used nowadays in the best class of houses, some of which show the natural color of the furs, while in other cases the pelts are dyed a totally different color to that which characterized the animal when alive. In some cases the skin of the animal is used alone in its original outline, and in other cases a second fur is introduced as a trimming to define the animal's pelt, and



in other cases several furs are combined to form an oblong rug, which is usually edged with another variety of fur.

Perhaps the handsomest rug of all are those made of the hide of the Mongolian tiger. The furry pelt is a tawny yellow hue marked with rich dark stripes, the various tints adapting it admirably to either a light or dark floor covering. A very beautiful tiger rug is untrimmed and has a full head, with distended jaws and cruel looking teeth, the head contributing greatly to the ornamental effect. In another rug of the same skin the head is only half raised, the closed mouth changing the expression to one of almost kitten-like gentleness. Still another tiger rug shows the shape of the animal without the head, the whole being defined by a bordering of goat. The last style, though less effective than those in which the head has been retained, is frequently preferred when intended for a rather small room or a narrow hallway. Any of these rugs may be used upon chairs or couches quite as effectively as upon the floor.

The nebulous or clouded tiger is a rare variety. Its skin is made up in a rug with a full head, which, by-the-by, is smaller than that of the Mongolian tiger. Trimming is omitted, as no contrasting color is needed to emphasize the beauty of the fur.

Next to the Mongolian tiger the Nubian lion furnishes a tawny yellow rug, with blackish ears. The full-grown male has a mane at three years old, and the total length is about 11 feet.

Lion hunting is such a precarious and dangerous occupation that the skin of the royal beast is extremely costly. In a lion rug that is handsome enough to deserve a most conspicuous location the once terrific brute seems enraged at his own helplessness, for the handsome full head has natural looking eyes that glare ferociously, and open jaws that seem ready to devour anything that comes within their reach; while in suggestive contrast with the life-like head is the outstretched and attenuated body.

These skins are very rare, and the price, mounted, with full head and open mouth, ranges from three hundred to a thousand dollars.

Not inferior to the hide of either tiger or lion is that of the white or polar bear. They exist on all the Asiatic coasts of the frozen ocean, and in America are found in Greenland and Labrador. They frequent the sea, and prey on seal and fish. The length of the animal is seven to nine feet, and the fur, which is white, compact and firm, is two or three inches long, with a woolly hair next the skin. The price of a white bear skin, mounted, with full head and open mouth and lined, ranges from fifty to four hundred dollars.

Panther rugs are very desirable for the dining-room. The skin is made up with a full head and without a fur border, with a half head, and trimmed with goat in the animal shape, and with a half head and oblong goat trimming.

In a drawing-room in which a white and gold scheme of coloring is carried out, the beautiful white bear rug finds its proper place, although it is very frequently chosen to adorn a bedroom, or a dwelling room, in the furnishing of which various tints are introduced. The skin of the white bear is large enough not to require trimming, but black bear is often used with it, in both the animal and oblong shapes, when the head is omitted. A rich looking rug has a full head as its only ornament, and will be very effective thrown over an arm chair. Another of the same fur may lie in the doorway between adjoining rooms, and a third may be placed before the fire-place, the light from the grate or wood fire throwing a rosy glow upon the glistening white fur.

Then there are the grizzly bear, and the brown bear, known also as the cinnamon or Isabella bear skins. These rugs are made up in plain and bordered rugs, and also untrimmed. A rug designed for a spacious square hall is made of brown bear in the natural shape, the head being full, with an abundance of glittering teeth, and the claws being arranged in a very natural and ornamental manner on the skin of the paws.

A very pretty rug, suitable for either a bedroom or a sitting-room, is made of red fox. The head is quarter raised, and the skin is mounted on gray cloth, which is laid in box plaits and pinked at the edges, providing a very neat trimming. Another rug of similar fur has a full head showing the teeth-like prongs and is filled out at the edges with black bear, the outer edges of the trimming being straight and the shape of the rug oblong. In a third rug the shape of the animal is outlined by a deep bordering of colored goat.

Rugs of gray, white and cross fox are made up like the red variety just mentioned, and, being small, several of the same or of different kinds may be used in one apartment. Thus, in a bedroom, an oblong rug of cross fox may be placed before the

bed, and two of white fox, in which the animal shape is left intact, may be disposed on the floor wherever taste directs. Silver fox is choice and dainty, and is particularly effective when made up in an oblong rug in combination with black bear, the head being full. The silvery white streaks in the fur show finely against the black trimming. The Jones River wolf has a mixed gray fur and is frequently made up in its natural shape without the head and without fur trimming, the pinked, plaited edge of the white cloth upon which it is mounted providing a neat finish. Rugs of this fur are also bordered with black goat, being made up either oblong or in the animal shape.

Very serviceable rugs are made of the ocelot or tiger cat, which has a smooth pelt-showing stripes and spots of gray, fawn and black. In some instances half heads are presented and trimmings of goat added, and in others the heads are omitted and the shapes outlined with goat. A very pretty rug consists of an oblong center composed of four ocelot skins, and a border of colored hair seal.

The South American leopard has a heavily furred, richly marked skin that makes beautiful rugs suitable for the library or drawing-room. One large skin is left untrimmed, the head being fully raised; another, decorated with black bear, shows the animal shape, with the head only quarter raised; and a third is filled in with goat to make an oblong shape, the head being removed. The jaguar is larger than the leopard and has great dark spots, and the pelts are used for rugs in the same manner as the leopard skins. In fact, all skins, save those of the largest animals, are used in conjunction with another fur in the manner described above; and when a rug of considerable size is desired, one of the trimmed varieties is chosen.

Oblong rugs of white, natural black and colored black Iceland sheep are warm and comfortable for the bedroom, and are used upon the couches and on the floor before the bed or dressing case or wherever desired.

Very pleasing effects may be produced with handsome fur rugs by throwing them over couches, or divans, the heads, if they are used, resting upon the floor, and answering as a foot-stool. An artistic idea is to lay in front of an antique *fautuil* the skin of a silver fox, from whose half open eyes all the cunning has departed, or to throw in the doorway of a room the skin of a Siberian wolf, the head of which has been removed, the form of the body being defined by a setting of dark fur.

The heads of animals mounted on oak, walnut or other hardwood panels are admired for decorating halls, libraries and dining-rooms, the panels matching the wood-work of the apartment in which they are placed. Among the heads especially favored for this purpose are those of the buffalo, moose, antelope, reindeer, grizzly bear and wolf. Several heads of various kinds may be effectively hung on the walls of a man's smoking-room or "den." A curio for the same apartment is a foot-stool formed of an elephant's foot. The hide is carefully dressed and the nails are polished with an enamel gloss. Buffalo horns mounted in fur are used for racks and placed wherever convenient.

The soft fur robes are impervious to cold, so that the occupant of carriage or sleigh, when wrapped almost to the eyes in a well-lined, heavily furred skin, may ride in comfort on the frostiest day. The heavier varieties of fur are, of course, preferred for sleighing and for country riding. Glossy black bear robes are used in both carriage and sleigh, being stylishly-looking and uncommonly warm. Black ukraine closely resembles Astrakhan, and, when made up into robes, is preferred for ladies' use, the robes being rather smaller than those provided for gentlemen. Ukraine is not so warm as the fluffier furs, and is, therefore, more frequently chosen for use in closed carriages.

For coachmen there are robes of brown and black colored goat, a very warm and strong fur that will withstand both rain and dust without serious injury. Serviceable robes for country driving, whether in sleigh or wagon, are made of natural-black sheep or *mouton*, brought from the Pyrenees, and of Hungarian lamb, a shaggy fur of a brownish-black hue.

Seal-skin makes a choice carriage or sleigh robe, but colored otter is softer and warmer-looking, though not really more comfortable; and close kin to the latter fur is handsome beaver, which is like the softest velvet to the touch, and very warm. A robe intended exclusively for ladies' use is made of Hudson's Bay sable and lined with heavy brown silk, the fur being rich enough to accord with the most elegant sleigh or carriage.

The robes and rugs above described, as well as a host of others equally artistic in design, may be found in the ware-rooms of Messrs. C. G. Gunther's Sons, No. 184 Fifth Avenue, New York City.